343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama, and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, contains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, néré/ of all carefully prepared sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts, little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away. They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

● 23| to approach because they are half wild. The donkeys are of medium
[172] size, but strong and stout; they will carry loads of sixty kilograms for days on end, and their help is priceless to those who trade in fabrics, kola nuts, and salt. There are some donkeys in practically every village.

Horses are quite common throughout the country, and every naba of any importance possesses one or several. Two distinct races are to be found. They are described by Binger as follows: "The most common has all the characteristics of the Arab horse without its qualities: slender head, short neck, thin limbs, receding rump, and very long mane and tail. The coats most frequently seen are bay, chestnut, gray, light bay, and roan; the last three always have patches on the forehead. Horses without white stockings are rare. The other race bears no likeness to the Arab horse. The animal is strong and beautiful, with the characteristics of our cavalry horse; it is about 1.57 to 1.62 meters /in height/. The head is slender and well joined, the limbs strong and muscular, the hooves broad with firm horn, the breast wide, and the mane and tail hair short. The most usual coats are various shades of bay and chestnut." (3) /9/ The Mossi, however,

3. Binger, Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée /From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea/, Vol. 1, p. 485. It seems exaggerated, however, to ascribe 1.57 meters to a Mossi horse. A horse of 1.52 meters /in height/ is a large horse here, and the average hardly exceeds 1.44 meters. For his part, Meniaud (Haut-Sénégal et Niger, Géographie economique II /Upper Senegal and Niger. Economic Geography, Series II, Vol. 2/, p. 106) states that "the horses of Upper Senegal and Niger seem to possess the characteristics of the Aryan and Mongolian races, occasionally modified by the Germanic race." Further on (p. 110) he includes the Mossi horse in the Mongolian race (Dougolawi or Nubian variety).

accustomed no doubt to getting horses in the course of raids, do not

231 bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the [136] tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

231 The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 437 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

231 The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bèsé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237] whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306 is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

cases are rare. Less rare are the children who care little for their parents. Nevertheless, old people are usually treated well and with great respect. A son who abandons his old father or mother is held in very poor esteem. A woman prefers to bear daughters who will help her in her daily work, but she hopes for one or two sons with whom she may live when she is old.

The girls live with their mother. As soon as they can walk, they follow her to the stream and return with a gourd of water on their heads. As they grow, so does the gourd, and little girls carry water jars weighing from fifteen to twenty kilograms. At home, young girls mill grain to feed the whole family, tend the fire, stir the sauce, wash the dishes and the clothes, sweep, in short, attend to all the household tasks under their mother's guidance. The only task of a woman with two or three half-grown daughters is to supervise their work. Because they are always with their mother, the young girls are usually more responsible and better behaved than the boys. Unfortunately they make up for this later, and more often than not, it is on their own initiative that they go at night to the young men's huts. A young man may give presents to a girl who has already been promised in marriage, and he may do so in front of her mother, who says nothing.

Boys help their father as soon as they are strong enough. Younger boys follow their older brothers into the bush as soon as they can and help them herd the sheep and goats. These boys go out every morning, before the sun has dried the dew, to look for new termite nests full of insects which the chicks are fond of eating. During the dry season, they cut down and plait grass to cover the roofs; if they are old enough, they even cut the firewood. When a little older, if their father or the person with whom they live owns a horse, they watch over it, take it to the stream to water it and to wash it, go into the bush to cut grass for it, and clean the stables. During the winter when the grass is green, each of the horses of a rich naba is cared for by three or four children. Some of them cut the grass, others /37/ stuff it almost by force into the horse's mouth, while one little boy drives the flies away with a stick to which a sort of flexible leather sole is attached. The winter season is a fine time for horses, who grow fat and heavy. Unfortunately, the Black does not think of the future and does not foresee how much dry grass will be needed to bridge the dry season; as a result, the horses suffer a great deal from hunger at that time.

221 241 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex- [231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 241 356 857 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing. /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré). The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups, a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest. The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May there are no pressing tasks.

[805] 221 241 [372] 476 It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolo). The natives gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the threshing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the previous day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them. The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wɛ́' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

224 389 These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without [411 752] a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and [231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February-April. - Analyst]

243 are tied, placed in baskets, and carried to special huts. These 343 are small straw huts built on stakes, that is, raised on thick pieces of wood, which stand in a long curved line by the fields. About twenty such huts often stand side by side. Both men and women share in the harvesting.

Whenever the millet is to be eaten, the heads are taken from 243 these straw huts and threshed with a stick to set the grain loose. This threshing is done by the men.

Aside from the ordinary small millet, it is the large red millet that is grown most extensively, as a rule, among the Mossi. They [194] call it kaziéra or kaziéga (we know that the r and g are interchangeable in Mossi; people will say, for example, either nora or noga to mean "chicken") and the Bambara call it niooulé. The large red millet is the kind used chiefly for dolo.

This is the millet that is planted before any other, as soon as the first rains begin to fall. The ouaka is used to remove the weeds which have grown in the fields, then the weeds are burned and the large red millet is sowed at the time of the first storms (April). It is sowed in the same fashion as the small millet, by holding the koutiaga in one hand and the small gourd containing grain in the other.

When the millet has come out of the ground, a fortnight /469/ is allowed to elapse and then the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. When the millet is grown, the women and children are sent out to protect it against birds. The millet is ripe around September 1.

The bulk of the harvesting work is done by the men. The stalks, which are usually 3 meters high and which may even reach 4 are cut down at the base. Once they have been dug out and laid down, the heads, which are thick and tuftlike with red flowers, are cut with a knife and carried to the soukala. The women do the carrying as they do for other kinds of millet. The large red millet is threshed only as it is needed. The threshing is done by the men with a stick.

Let us note that when a new piece of land is cleared, the large red millet is sown first to find out if the soil is good. It is only in the following year, when this has been ascertained, that the small millet is sown.

The red millet is also cultivated around the soukala, like maize.

[273] As a rule the Mossi use the large red millet only to make dolo 231 (dama in Mossi). They may also give it to horses, but some horses 262

231 will not take it. The Mossi only eat it themselves if there is no
262 other kind of millet available, or in times of famine. In any case,
[751] the red millet has a constipating effect, and when people suffer from colic they are given a to /mush/ of red millet to check the attack.

243 The Mossi also grow the ordinary large white millet, which is the kind grown most extensively, aside from sanio, throughout the Sudan. The Mossi call it baninga, the Bambara kéningué or guessékélé. It is called kéningué around Ségou, and guessékélé around Nioro. The Nounouma call it nienso, and so do the Kassonfra /Awuna/. The Kassonboura /Kasena/ call it béninga, that is to say, they have adopted the Mossi word and slightly altered it. (We saw, in fact, that some Kassouna-Boura, at least those of Po and Tiahané, are Kassouna-Mossi rather than Kassouna-Boura.)

Europeans often give this kind of millet the name of "pearly millet" /mil nacré/ or "horse millet," because it is tender and easy to crush.

/470/ This millet is not grown by every Mossi. Those who do grow the large white millet eat it themselves. They also give it to [231] their horses. It is cultivated exactly in the same fashion as the small millet, that is to say, it is sown and harvested at the same time.

The Mossi also grow the kipéléro or kipélégo (from ki, "millet," and péléro or pélégo, "white"). This is the yaro or yara of the Gourounsi, and probably the n'guéné or n'kendé of the Bambara and Malinké, a kind of millet intermediate between the small and large white varieties. Actually, one of my informants told me that the kipéléro is sown along with the ordinary small millet, that no distinction is made between the two, and that they are used for the same purposes, while another informant maintained that it is a kind of large white millet.

The Mossi also grow some gadiaba. This is a kind of large millet which is either white or red. The Bambara call it gadiabadié when it is white, hamadiboubou when it is red. The Mossi refer to the gadiabadié as noira. They cultivate it only in Boussouma province. As for hamadiboubou, it is not to be found among the Mossi.

As far as the early millet /mil précoce/ is concerned, the Mossi are familiar with it and call it nado, but they do not cultivate it. This is the souna of the Bambara, the tiara of the Nounouma and

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left 251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The 252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

244 In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug 251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed 252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on

241 2. The sououga, a knife used to cut down the heads of millet.
3. The gouégo, a curved knife, a kind of scythe which is used to cut straw, for example when preparing thatch for hut roofs.

To summarize, cultivation is the most important pursuit among the Mossi. It insures the subsistence of this population which is [161] relatively dense, since there are 25 inhabitants per square kilometer, a very high figure unusual for West Africa. The species of cultivated plants are as numerous as anywhere else, and the agricultural tools tend to be superior. In spite of all this, the Mossi are not very good cultivators, and in this respect I believe that they must be placed beneath the Bobo, Gourounsi, Habé, Bambara, etc. One senses that the Mossi descend at least in part from people who were once familiar with easier and more fruitful ways of procuring food (such as war and attendant loot) or, to put it another way, one senses the meeting of two groups, one of which was truly adept at cultivation while the other was less so. Thus, although the Mossi are cultivators first and foremost and actually subsist on cultivation, the latter is not as basic to them as it is to the Bobo, the Gourounsi, etc. They do practice cultivation, this is even by far their chief subsistence activity, and yet one cannot say that they are, in all respects, good cultivators.

231 Are they at least noteworthy stockbreeders?

To this we may give forthwith a negative answer. The Mossi are very mediocre, not to say worthless breeders. This is not to mean, incidentally, that there is no cattle in Mossi territory. There [563] is a great deal, on the contrary, and this stems from the presence of the Foulbé, who are cattle herders, as much as from the presence of the Yarsé, who /487/ have always owned considerable quantities of cattle, and from the density of the Mossi population. The Mossi themselves, nevertheless, own little cattle. To be more exact, they have a low per capita average of cattle.

231 563 We might list over-all or partial figures, but those most recently compiled are vitiated by the fact that Mossi territory lost part of its cattle in recent years due to repeated famines around 1906-1908 and to an overly rigorous tax system that went into effect a little later. We shall, therefore, merely validate our statement that the

231 563 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi 231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he 563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other 464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

[567] We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all 563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

● 231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives [232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for 782 meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 651 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

231 While the Mossi entrust their cattle to the Foulbé, as we have seen earlier, they do no such thing with their sheep which are kept with the goats. They are handed over to the young boys to care for during the winter and the dry season.

231 As almost everywhere in West Africa, the flesh of the sheep is
262 of mediocre quality and smells of suint. The natives nevertheless like it very much.

231 The sheep have short hair and yield no wool. Actually, in all of West Africa, only the Macina sheep yield some.

"The Mossi sheep," says the Cahier des Rapports of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "differs basically from the Macina sheep. While the latter are rather large, with very thick hair, the Ouagadougou sheep are small with short hair. The males have horns, and usually long manes.

"The sheep race of the Macina does not in fact exist among the Mossi, for the climate of the region does not permit it. In the northern part of the circle one may find, though rarely, some sheep belonging to that breed brought by the Dioula and destined for slaughter, but nowhere is that race raised /among the Mossi/.

"Although the Mossi sheep cannot be exploited in any way as far as their hair is concerned, they nevertheless constitute a source of income of some importance to the natives. /490/ Sheep are indeed quite numerous throughout the circle. They are chiefly consumed locally. A few flocks, however, are led to the markets of the Gold Coast."

[77] Let us note further the existence of so-called "house sheep," raised individually in the household in accordance with a custom introduced among the Mossi by the Yarsé, and fattened carefully to be slaughtered on festive occasions.

Goats are not entrusted to the Foulbé either, and the latter, incidentally, would not want them. During the winter season, they are herded by children who prevent them from eating the millet. During the dry season they are not herded, and they may wander about as they please.

The majority of Mossi goats are of dwarf species. Yet goats of usual size, large goats which are no doubt of Maure /Moorish/ origin, are also to be found in small numbers.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [232 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 435 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 438] animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

235 The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 462] ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 237 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey,
[262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also
272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari,
[435] which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

● 231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot [435] where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rônier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are 422 all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even ● 231 by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their
248 4 INTRODUCTION

249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and
[492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as
[439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a
[439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old. Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide-
[771] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased ob-
[178] servance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field
[301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear
[325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and
[439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers
439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least
[443] six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such
[197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

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Visitors to the court of Mogho Naba Sanem salute him in the traditional Mossi manner.
From Louis Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays Kong et le Mossi, 1887–1889* (Paris, 1892).

[p. 178 - A]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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[Fr. 178-3]

(*Left*) Mogho Naba Kougri and Ouezzain Coulibaly, who became Vice President of the Government Council of the Upper Volta in 1957. (*Center*) Maurice Yaméogo, President of the Republic of Upper Volta. (*Right*) Mogho Naba Kougri (1957–) on his ceremonial horse at his installation.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. Tobacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food. But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the northern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas.

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders.

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1328, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before.

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts:

> Five journies from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819 : 180)

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

175 437 Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] . . . sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journies by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance . . . by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)[1]

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of livestock in Mossi trading. [23]

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646–648) who, although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupela which according to

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(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasoagho is the name of a province of Wagadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasoagho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasis and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupeala is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

[63] [366] [648]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi." Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu, and reported that to this market:

> [23] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc. 1900, agrees with Barth.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

people also assemble sheep of
the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172)

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northweast of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douenzta on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krause 1887–88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and live-
stock against marauding beasts and thieves.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

same as those traded in pre-European times. For example, my notes for March 22, 1956, record that five young men were transporting 50-kilogram sacks of onions on their bicycles for trade in Ghana. On March 23, the next day, I wrote the following: "This appears to be the season of increased trade and the donkey trains are passing to and from Wagadougou and the Yatenga to Po (a town on the Ghana-Voltaic Republic border) and Bolgatenga in northern Ghana. Very often the donkeys carry nothing down, and at other times they are loaded with beans, millet, cotton bands, onions, peanuts and other vegetable produce. On the return trip they are laden with kola nuts going northward. This afternoon I counted twenty-eight asses coming from Ghana and going towards Wagadougou. Eighteen of them were laden with kolas, and ten were carrying long pieces of scrap iron which I was told, were to be converted into hoes for use during the coming planting season."

There is also a steady trade in livestock between Mossi country and the southern lands but the height of this trade occurs just prior to Ramadan. Beginning from one month to one week before this important Moslem feast day, the roads of Mossi country are clogged with thousands of sheep and goats being driven south for the use of religious households in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Cattle are also shipped during this period, but not in the same volume since they are most often used collectively by Moslem families too poor to have their own sheep or goat.

The total volume of trade between Mossi country and Ghana and the Ivory Coasts is difficult to ascertain since despite the existence of Customs Posts a great deal of contraband trading takes place. My notes for December 12, 1955, read *"Contraband"*: Two customs men came into the village to complain to the district chief about the behavior of Naba, one of his village chiefs. This is what happened: About two days ago, two agents saw in the forests the tracks of some thirty-five asses (heavily laden as can be seen by the depth of the tracks) and the marks of a bicycle with new tires. The agents followed the tracks all day and rested during the night. Yesterday they had to interrupt their search when the bicycle of one of the agents broke down, and when they resumed the search later in the day they came across five asses laden with kola nuts inside the compound of a man in Naba's village. Since they were forbidden by law to go into the man's compound and seize the animals, they went to the village chief in an attempt to have him tell the man to put the animals outside so that they could be seized. This the village chief refused to do, stating that it was not his affair, and adding that the agents should have seized the animals in the forest. The agents, now helpless, came and

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

443 512 571 648 493 their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

564 273 231 485 Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279–738 not processed]